

Florida Mountain Mining Sites,  
Sullivan Mine  
Silver City Vicinity  
Owyhee County  
Idaho

HAER No. ID-31-I

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Columbia Cascades System Support Office  
909 First Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

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**HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD**  
**FLORIDA MOUNTAIN MINING SITES, SULLIVAN MINE**

**HAER NO. ID-31-I**

**Location:** The Sullivan mine is located on the east side of Florida Mountain, near Black Jack Gulch, and the Empire State.

**Quad:** USGS DeLamar 7.5'  
UTM: Zone 11 519933 E, 47663024 N

**Date of Construction:** 1880s

**Present Owners:** Kinross DeLamar Mine Company

**Present Use:** To be demolished

**Significance:** The site is associated with early mining activity (1860s-1880s) in southwestern Idaho.

**Report Prepared by:** Madeline Buckendorf and Barbara Perry Bauer

**Date:** June 1995

### **Site Layout and Description:**

The Sullivan mine is located 50 yards below a large rock outcropping. It consists of a waste rock dump and an adit. The site is located on a ledge below an extremely steep slope; large fir or pine trees surround the opening. The mine portal, or drift set, consists of post-and-beam construction. The larger timbers seem to be hand-hewn. The posts are nailed together with round nails. A newer grill gate is placed over the entrance, indicating that the site may have been recently worked. The entrance's dimensions are: @ 5 1/2' wide by @ 4' tall. The cap and posts measure 8" x 8". A spreader below the cap and is approximately 2" x 6". Outer posts brace the timbering at a 45 degree angle; the posts' dimensions are 4" x 6". One layer of flat lagging lies over cap; the lagging's dimensions are 4" x 6". Another layer of flat lagging of approximately 3" x 6" is laid perpendicularly to the second layer. Unpeeled pole lagging composes the final layer; these poles are covered by rhyolite debris. There is much rubble above the portal. None of the timbers are mortised and tenoned; they are only held together by nails.

At the dump site located below mine, all vestiges of tram or tracks and ore carts are gone. Some buckets can be seen in the interior of the mine.

A recent road cut lies below mine portal; it probably removed tracks or tramway to the dumpsite. Some large iron cable lays 20 yards above on the hillside.

### **Historic Context:**

The Jacobs Gulch miner, John F. Sullivan, was actively involved in several mining ventures on Florida Mountain. Deed records indicate that Sullivan, with Isaac Phillips, located the Sullivan and Phillips mines in May 1887.<sup>1</sup> Although separate deeds were issued the mines were worked together as one. A May 21 article in the Idaho Avalanche noted that "John F. Sullivan and Isaac Phillips have discovered a large quartz lode several hundred feet west of the Black Jack, which contains fine milling ore in great quantities". By June, the two had sunk a shaft into the lode and it was estimated that the vein of ore was approximately 5 or 6 feet wide. The discovery was made under "the old Black Jack ore house" and it was thought that the lode fed the placers of Coffee Gulch.<sup>2</sup>

In January of 1888, Phillips and Sullivan were extracting enough metals to keep a mill running. It was reported that the mine turned out "5 bars of bullion valued at over \$11,000 as a result of the first run." The ore was not high grade and was valued at \$32 a ton.<sup>3</sup> In December they leased the mine to four miners, Mr. Hicks, Murray, Gearhart and Kent, for six months.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning in 1890 Sullivan and Phillips were again in charge of the mine. There was enough work at the mine to employ four men. Two men worked on the drift and two men worked on stopping.<sup>5</sup> In February of that year it was reported that the richest ore was being sacked and that the lode got larger and richer the deeper it went into the mountain.<sup>6</sup> The April 26 edition of the Idaho Avalanche stated that the ore from the mine was milled at \$100 to \$300 per ton. This was a considerable increase from 1888. In June, 80 tons were taken to the Leonard mill for processing.<sup>7</sup> There was good news for all the miners of Florida Mountain in July. The tunnel being cross cut

between the Black Jack and the Empire State was cut through the Phillips and Sullivan property. It was discovered that the lode was richer than the levels above and double the width of earlier lodes.<sup>8</sup>

Sullivan and Phillips continued to push a drift south and reached the chute of ore from which the lessees had previously taken out \$20,000 in ore. The chute widened to three feet and had a rich vein of silver and gold.<sup>9</sup> Ten to twelve tons were taken from the mine daily and hauled to Leonards mill.<sup>10</sup> In November, a large chimney of ore was discovered and six men were hired to work in the mine. When the discovery was made, Phillips and Sullivan had an option to a party for \$100,000. The option expired on November 1. The Idaho Avalanche described the incident in a November issue:

"The owners haven't been working the richest ore, not wanting to encourage the option holder....A streak of talc clay in the lode is literally bound together with wire gold. Phillips lost sleep over whether his miners would let the cat out of the bag before the option expired. They are now working this chimney."<sup>11</sup>

The following winter was spent making improvements to the mine. Phillips and Sullivan contracted with their crew to run a crosscut tunnel into the ledge into the adjacent Belfast claim.<sup>12</sup> They had located the Belfast claim near the mouth of the Phillips and Sullivan tunnel in 1889.<sup>13</sup>

The mine continued to produce steadily into 1892. It was described in an issue of the Owyhee Avalanche as "one of the few mines which, in miner's parlance, has been a good poor man's mine. It has paid from the grass roots down, paying owners and everyone connected with it." <sup>14</sup>

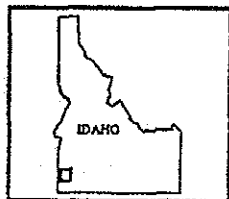
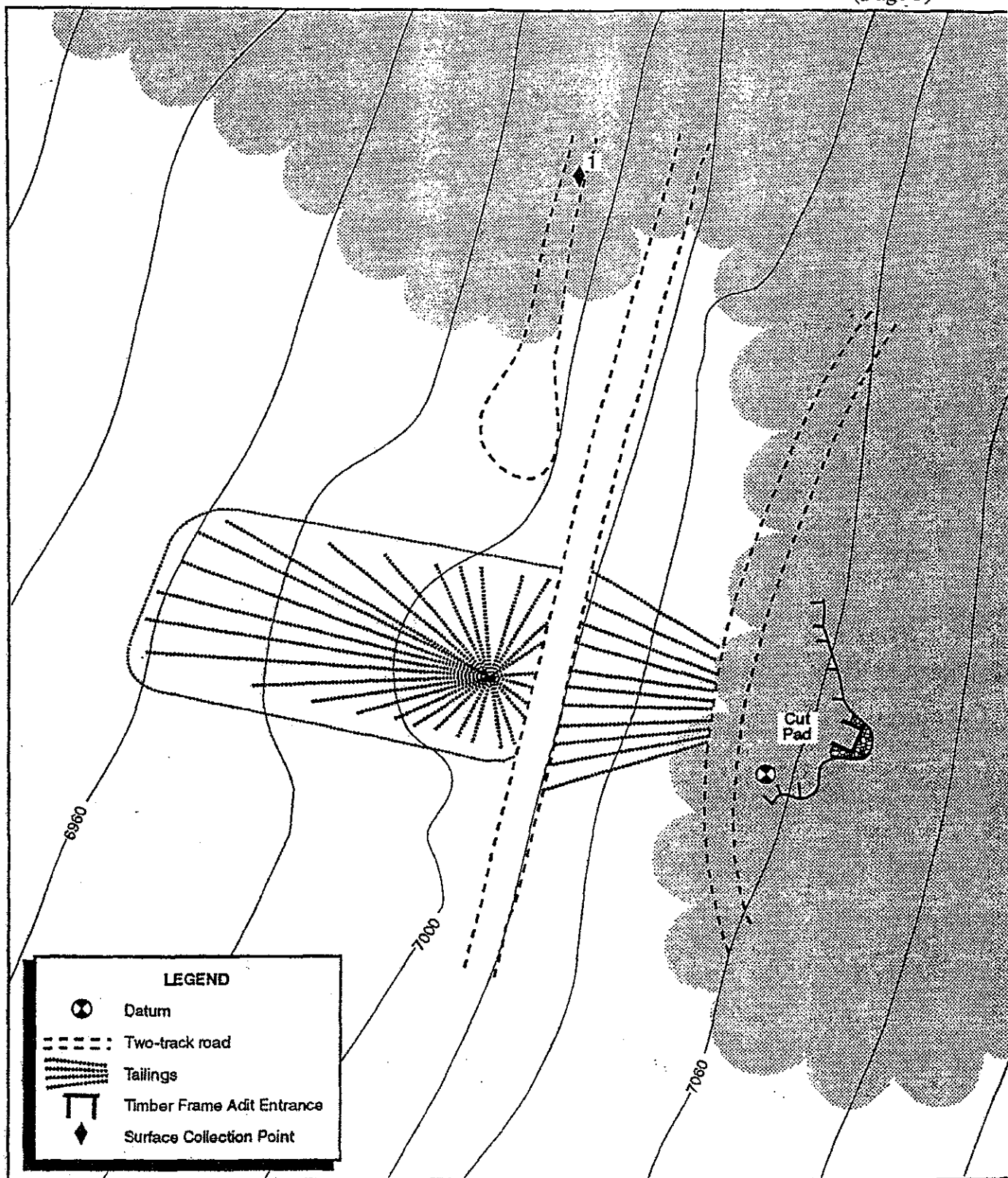
Phillips and Sullivan took regular shipments of ore from the mine through 1893 and 1894. However, in 1895 they dissolved their partnership and the Phillips and Sullivan mines were brought to court for settlement. Superintendent James Hutchinson of the Trade Dollar was appointed receiver for the property.<sup>15</sup>

The following year, the Idaho & Pittsburgh Mining & Milling Company bought the Phillips, Sullivan and Belfast for a low price of \$25,000.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, the mines became part of the numerous claims of the Trade Dollar Consolidated Mining & Milling Company. The company was formed in 1899 to merge and manage property previously held by the Idaho & Pittsburgh Mining & Milling Company, the Trade Dollar Mining & Milling Company, and the Florida Mountain Mining & Milling Company.<sup>17</sup> The ownership of the Trade Dollar group continued to change after 1910, when the Trade Dollar Consolidated Mining & Milling Company evolved into the Swan Falls Power Company and then into Peter Steele's Empire Mines Company. The mines appear to have remained in the Empire Mines Company until 1959.

The names of the Phillips and Sullivan mines are included on annual reports for the Inspector of Mines though the ownership changed several times. It appears the Phillips and Sullivan mines were used to access the Belfast and Black Jack tunnels for the Trade Dollar group. No further information or production figures are available for these sites.

END NOTES

1. Owyhee County Courthouse, Mining Claims Book 7, pages 287-288.
2. No heading, Idaho Avalanche, May 21, 1887, page 3.
3. "Local Intelligence," Idaho Avalanche, January 25, 1888, page 3.
4. "Local Intelligence," Idaho Avalanche, December 8, 1888 page 3.
5. "Local Intelligence," Idaho Avalanche, March 27, 1890 page 3.
6. "Local Intelligence," Idaho Avalanche, February 22, 1890, page 3.
7. "Mining Mention," Idaho Avalanche, June 7, 1890, page 3.
8. "Local Intelligence," Idaho Avalanche, July 5, 1890 page 3.
9. No heading, Idaho Avalanche, July 26, 1890 page 3.
10. "Local Intelligence," Idaho Avalanche, August 30, 1890, page 3.
11. "A Booming Camp, New and Rich Developments," Idaho Avalanche, November 8, 1890, page 3.
12. "Mining Mention," Idaho Avalanche, December 13, 1890 page 3.
13. Owyhee County Mining Claims, Book 8, page 57.
14. "Phillips and Sullivan Mines," Idaho Avalanche, February 13, 1892, page 1.
15. "Phillips and Sullivan," Idaho Avalanche, August 23, 1895 page 13.
16. "The Deal Closed," Idaho Avalanche, February 26, 1896, page 1.
17. "Florida Mountain Mining" Robert Romig, unpublished report, 1992, Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives.



SULLIVAN MINE

